

## Exploring the Entrepreneurial Micro-Ecosystem: Agribusiness Among Youth in Rural South Africa

Tumo Paulus Kele

[keletp@gmail.com](mailto:keletp@gmail.com)

Entrepreneurship Development Unit, Faculty of Management Sciences,  
Central University of Technology, Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

Dennis Yao Dzansi

[ddzansi@cut.ac.za](mailto:ddzansi@cut.ac.za)

Entrepreneurship Development Unit, Faculty of Management Sciences,  
Central University of Technology, Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

<https://doi.org/10.51137/ijarbm.2024.5.1.12>

**Abstract** – In recent times, entrepreneurial ecosystems have increasingly being researched and seen as a vehicle for empowerment and poverty alleviation by policy-makers, particularly in developing economies. Scholars have primarily studied this concept in developed markets, with a focus on urban regions in those markets. However, in the South African context, there is an increasing realization that entrepreneurship among youth in small towns and villages is key in unlocking economic development and self-sustainability in those areas. Thus, research in these regions is necessary for deeper understanding and scholarly engagement into the entrepreneurial ecosystems emerging among youths. In addressing insufficient attention to small town and village entrepreneurship ecosystems, a conceptual comparative-case study of three agribusinesses in rural Eastern Cape province of South Africa was conducted. Thus, the research examines how and to what extent entrepreneurial activities among youth in rural areas manifested in promising agribusinesses within a short space of time, after being affected by Covid-19 lockdowns. The findings depicted that (a) agribusiness is key in rural areas and among youth, (b) rural communities engage in community-based agricultural projects to encourage self-sustainability and entrepreneurship, and (c) there is a need for a more focused support by policy-makers in these areas for them to flourish and open more markets.

**Keywords** – Base-Of-The-Pyramid, Agribusiness, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, New Venture Creation, Rural Youth

*Submitted: 2024-05-02. Revised: 2024-06-03. Accepted: 2024-06-12.*

## 1 Introduction

Scholars have increasingly shown interest in the notion of entrepreneurial ecosystems, although focus has been on technological entrepreneurship (Boucher, Cullen, & Calitz, 2023; Malecki, 2018; Scaringella & Radziwon, 2018). Also, policy-makers in both developed and developing economies have recommended entrepreneurial ecosystems as a viable mechanism for competitiveness and support (Lukeš, Longo, & Zouhar, 2019). Higher education institutions have also seen the potential successes of ecosystems in facilitating technology transfer (Lindeque, 2018) through collaborating among themselves and further assisting SMEs. In addition, larger corporations have contributed through the development of their own business incubators to aid in innovation and entrepreneurship (Labutte, 2023; Shankar & Shepherd, 2019).

To the researcher's knowledge, entrepreneurial ecosystems have largely been studied at the macro level and developing economies and rural areas have not been of particular interest (Boucher, et al., 2023; Spigel, 2017; Malecki, 2018; Stam, 2015). There has been fewer investigations at the micro level amid some scholars and policy-makers encouraging for research in that area (Audretsch & Belitski, 2017). Thus, resulting in inadequate literature and data being available about these ecosystems at the micro-level. For this research, entrepreneurial micro-ecosystem will be defined as...“a local open system that interacts with the entrepreneurial ecosystem and is driven by an actor or group of actors capable of fostering a dynamic of innovation and entrepreneurship” (Banc & Messeghem, 2020:594). SMEs that have been supported by larger businesses are good examples since they have managed to stimulate innovation and broader entrepreneurial activities in their respective entrepreneurial ecosystems (Cao, & Shi, 2021; Neck, Meyer, Cohen, & Corbett, 2004).

Thus, this research focuses on examining the strategies SMEs in rural areas use to anchor themselves within their entrepreneurial ecosystems. The research further focuses on both structural and strategic dynamics of these SMEs to advance insight into the value created by ecosystems in their rural regions (Atiase, Mahmood, Wang, & Botchie, 2017; Theodoraki & Messeghem, 2017). In doing so, it adopts a multifaceted approach as recommended by few earlier scholars to dwell into the peculiarities in entrepreneurial support of SMEs in rural areas (Baraldi, Ingemansson, & Havenvind, 2016; Sheriff, & Muffatto, 2015; Theodoraki & Messeghem, 2017). Following the advances by Spigel (2017), the researcher suggest a four types attributes approach to account for the structural and strategic dynamics spelt out above. These are the cultural, social, legitimation and material attributes.

Given that research on this topic in rural regions of South Africa is limited, the researcher attempts to fill this gap by examining and comparing the inter-case dynamics between SMEs in focus and the entrepreneurial environment in the selected province. To understand these inter-case dynamics, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1. What social factors ignited interest among younger individuals into agricultural entrepreneurship?

RQ2. What challenges do SMEs in the rural entrepreneurial micro-ecosystems face in businesses?

RQ3. How does agricultural entrepreneurial activity manifest in rural youth?

Thus, in this paper, the researcher first discuss entrepreneurial ecosystems in rural regions of South Africa at a micro level, with a focus on youth. Second, the researcher presents a methodological framework that was followed and the results of the research. Third, the paper introduce three SMEs being studied and closely examine their operations to distill the shared features that have enabled them to create value in a promising way under extreme resource scarcities. And lastly, the paper discuss the current research and the concept of entrepreneurial ecosystems in the context of a developing economy and rural areas in particular and the importance of support by larger businesses for the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs in villages.

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Entrepreneurial micro-ecosystems in context

Research has argued against the value of personality-based explanations of entrepreneurship in that, it ignores the broader social and economic structures of entrepreneurial ecosystems (Dodd & Anderson, 2007). Scholars increasingly questioned the value of personality-based explanations of entrepreneurship in favor of investigations into the broader social and economic structures surrounding the entrepreneurship process (Dodd & Anderson, 2007). Thus, earlier research (Spilling, 1996) discovered that regional, cultural, social, political, and economic structures influence entrepreneurial ecosystems. These authors emphasizes the importance of community in aiding SMEs financially and educationally. And the economic surroundings necessary to provide resources for new ventures. Global organizations such as World Economic Forum (2013) have also attested to the efficiencies of this approach for the development of economic strategies.

Research on entrepreneurial ecosystems has not produced a common definition on what constitutes it in terms of economic and social conditions. However, recently Spigel (2017) suggested elements of entrepreneurial ecosystem can be broadly described as social, material, or cultural. According to Fritsch and Storey (2014), cultural factors are approaches towards entrepreneurship; these could be positive cultural that deems risks associated with entrepreneurship as normal and as a source of encouragement for creativity. A widespread theme in the existing literature is defining the necessary economic and social conditions for a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem. While there is not yet a single agreed-upon definition or typology of ecosystems, Spigel (2017) suggests that while there may be disagreement about the exact mixture of elements constituting an entrepreneurial ecosystem, they can

Exploring the Entrepreneurial Micro-Ecosystem:  
Agribusiness Among Youth in Rural South Africa

be broadly categorized as cultural, social, or material. Therefore, these cultures and norms are filled with success stories relating to local businesses, thus legitimizing venture creations. Aoyama (2009) attest that relating these stories and historical backgrounds serve as encouragements for newer entrepreneurs to engage to be more willing to take the risks necessary for innovative entrepreneurship.

The primary argument of the recent literature on successful entrepreneurial ecosystems is that, ecosystems should support entrepreneurs to sense new markets and use local resources and financing to develop new business ventures (Spigel & Harrison, 2017). Arguably, this negates earlier approaches to entrepreneurship development which emphasizes on increasing start-up rate than focusing on high-growth entrepreneurship. Thus, it encourages the notion of picking promising or winning entrepreneurs than a blanket approach of supporting all new venture creations without closely looking into those with potential (Storey, 2005).

In the South African context, societal perceptions are that, culture and social settings influence the propensity for new venture creations (Bowmaker-Falconer & Meyer, 2022). This could be observed when studying different ethnicities in different regions by closely looking into their favored entrepreneurial ambitions and examples of success stories in areas where they have shown interest (Tehseen & Anderson, 2020). Thus, owing to the dynamics surrounding the creation of cultural practices in venture creations, policy-makers should be intentional and careful not to use a blanket approach when thinking about assisting different regions in the country.

## **2.2 Conceptual antecedents of entrepreneurial ecosystems**

Currently, there is limited evidence on the importance of antecedents of ecosystems in the success of SMEs in developing economies. The evidence that is currently available is largely theoretical and speculative, primarily depicted in media reports. Thus, connecting factors of precursors of entrepreneurial ecosystems to practical or lived experiences is important, though still lacking.

### **2.2.1 Youth in entrepreneurship**

First, since this research is focusing on SMEs in the agricultural sector, it was prudent that more focus is afforded to the literature in that area. In so doing, the researcher looks at the business initiatives by youth in rural villages of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, who are involved in small-holder farmer and using it for survival. This is owing to the fact that these SMEs hugely contribute to resolving unemployment in rural population (Beynon, Jones, & Pickernell, 2016). Furthermore, young people can fulfil their life ambitions and aspirations through setting up of agricultural SMEs.

Entrepreneurship is perceived not only as a means to foster economic progress but also as a catalyst for societal transformations (Ratten & Dana, 2019). Youth in entrepreneurship, has emerged as a fresh approach to en-

hance the economic inclusion of underprivileged and marginalized populations (Meagher, 2016). As expressed by Meagher (2016), these passionate affirmations of interdependence between formal and informal innovators coexist with a persistent tendency to overlook the realities of informal economies as structured systems with distinct economic interests and patterns of accumulation. These contributions emphasize the magnitude of the "informal economy" and the imperative to gain a better understanding of it (Ram, Edwards, Jones, & Villares-Varela, 2017). Societal elements are occasionally assumed in entrepreneurship research without being thoroughly examined (Ratten & Dana, 2019). Hence, the present study is founded on the premise that the significance of entrepreneurial ecosystem must be scrutinized concerning entrepreneurship and the implications of entrepreneurial behaviors borne from it (Ratten & Dana, 2019).

Beynon et al. (2016) argue that the role of entrepreneurship varies across countries at different stages of economic development, and therefore, the factors influencing entrepreneurship may differ as well. To examine entrepreneurial activity and attitudes in different country settings, Beynon et al. (2016) utilized the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor survey. They employed the total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) measure, which encompasses individuals actively involved in nascent entrepreneurship or starting a new business, as well as those owning or managing a new firm in its initial stages after launch. Notably, Bruns, Bosma, Sanders and Schramm (2017) found that most countries with high TEA are characterized as factor-driven or efficiency-driven economies rather than innovation-driven ones. This valuable discovery aligns with the present study's focus on the role of entrepreneurial ecosystems and social factors in youth entrepreneurship, specifically in the rural areas of South Africa during the nascent stage.

### **2.2.2 Institutions, policy and ecosystems**

The concept of institutions encompasses various aspects across a broad range of social science fields. It encompasses economic perspectives (Williams & Vorley, 2015) as well as sociological perspectives on institutions (Aidis, 2017). The hierarchical approach, building upon the work of Williams and Vorley (2015), explores how the intricate interplay of cultural, political, and legal frameworks influences economic development. Anggadwita, Ramadani, and Ratten (2017) assert that institutional arrangements define incentives that shape the rational choices of individuals and firms. Within this context, Williams and Vorley (2015) differentiate between formal "rules of the game," such as laws and regulations, and informal or unwritten codes encompassing social arrangements that can either hinder or facilitate business activities.

Therefore, it becomes evident that entrepreneurs, just like any other individuals and organizations, are significantly influenced by the institutional environment in which they operate. Consequently, their strategies will reflect the opportunities and constraints defined by this context (Love & Roper, 2015). Williams and Vorley (2015) contend that the institutional arrange-

ments that establish the prevailing system of rewards will shape the allocation of efforts among various types of entrepreneurial activities, whether they are productive, unproductive, or even destructive in nature. If framework conditions entail excessive business regulations, rampant corruption, and inadequate protection of property rights, unfavorable economic outcomes may arise, leading to the emergence of shadow economies or the misallocation of resources. To foster economic growth, policymakers are advised to cultivate institutions that incentivize entrepreneurs to engage in wealth creation through growth-oriented and productive entrepreneurial endeavors while penalizing those who pursue unproductive entrepreneurship (Love & Roper, 2015). A supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem, characterized by the safeguarding of property rights, an efficient system for enforcing contracts, and limitations on the government's ability to transfer wealth through taxation and regulation, will nurture individual initiatives and promote the launch of productive entrepreneurship (Bridge & O'Neill, 2013).

The OECD (2018) has introduced a framework demonstrating the crucial role of a conducive business environment, encompassing institutional and regulatory settings, in motivating risk-taking and entrepreneurial experimentation while fostering the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), regardless of the contextual factors impacting entrepreneurs. An advantageous institutional and regulatory framework can manifest in several ways, such as the availability of credit services, low interest rates on loans, efficient market operations, well-defined property laws, and favorable conditions for exporting (Bridge & O'Neill, 2013). Consequently, in the context of this research, it can be proposed that effective formal institutions governing the economic environment in rural economies are instrumental in reducing the burdensome bureaucratic processes encountered by entrepreneurs. This reduction in administrative complexities can mitigate uncertainties and decrease operational and transaction costs associated with conducting business (Williams & Vorley, 2015).

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Geographic context of the cases

This research study is based in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa with focus on the rural regions and villages in these places. SMEs that were researched are in the villages of Dutywa, Mbokotwane and Qumbu. These villages belonged to the former homelands in the apartheid South Africa and they are still lagging behind in terms of innovation and sustainable new venture creations (Boucher, et al., 2023). The villages struggle to attract investment and their local municipal government lacks competent labor.

Despite national calls to promote entrepreneurship in South Africa, the IDP indicated that the cost of doing business was high compared to other cities in South Africa (NMBM, 2021). Subsequently, South Africa's National Treasury is attempting to lower the cost of doing business in the metropole to attract business (NMBM, 2021).

Exploring the Entrepreneurial Micro-Ecosystem:  
Agribusiness Among Youth in Rural South Africa

Furthermore, most businesses in the region are informal and unregistered. Dobbin (2019) asserted that the number of enterprises within the micro-enterprise category accounts for approximately 87.4% of businesses operating in Nelson Mandela Bay. The concentration of total informal SMMEs in the informal sector shows disproportionate employment. In this line, the concentration of informal businesses has led to poor economic growth, which has led to a situation of high unemployment and counteracted circular entrepreneurship. The current report of unemployment rate stands at 34.7% (Kimberley, 2022) and the levels of inequality are fairly high across Nelson Mandela Bay (National Treasury, 2021). Notably, a Gini coefficient of 0.63 was reported that is indicative of high inequality (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2020).

### 3.2 Data collection and analysis

Given the context of this research, a qualitative approach was chosen as a best option and case study design was implemented. The researcher collected data from various sources, including existing case studies, published and unpublished reports and articles, interviews with the founders conducted by third parties, informed observations, and internet sources. These diverse sets of data were instrumental in identifying patterns and facilitating comparisons across different cases. It is important to acknowledge the limitations inherent in the sampling and data analysis approaches employed in this study. Nonetheless, this research represents a significant initial step towards offering tentative propositions for a more comprehensive empirical research agenda in the future, with the aim of achieving greater inclusivity.

The researcher opted to employ data analysis based on the principles of the general inductive approach, which is a systematic method for analyzing qualitative data guided by pre-established themes aligned with specific research objectives. By adopting this inductive approach, the primary objective was to facilitate the organic emergence of research findings from the raw data, without being constrained by rigid methodologies (Silverman, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994). To commence the analysis, the transcripts underwent thorough and repetitive scrutiny with the aim of identifying recurring themes across multiple cases.

Building on this initial groundwork, a coding frame was developed using Atlas.ti software, enabling the systematic coding of the transcripts. The primary objective of this coding process was to conceptually categorize the activities undertaken by the entrepreneurs. In addition to this, the analysis involved conducting inter-case comparisons and drawing insights from other similar cases documented in the existing literature, enhancing the depth and richness of the results (Amal & Filho, 2010). This iterative approach empowered the researcher to refine and organize the codes into more comprehensive themes, facilitating a deeper comprehension of the research topic.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 The social factors

In underprivileged contexts like villages, agricultural entrepreneurship has emerged as a potential restorative measure to income and societal challenges (McMullen, 2011). As such, one draws on a set of assumptions that the effects of the being underprivileged on entrepreneurial activities, and the inadequate income may be related in establishing agribusinesses: “While we were learning from home, the government allowance for university students (NSFAS) coming from disadvantaged background kept coming in. In the month of April 2020, R1 500 came in, and I used it to buy vegetable seeds because that is what I started with” (farmer 1). Therefore, rural poverty can be alleviated through entrepreneurship by addressing agricultural financial scarcity. Meaning, since poverty is the result of a lack of income, the provision of start-up capital towards agribusinesses will allow entrepreneurship to flourish (Sutter, Bruton, & Chen, 2019). Youth agribusinesses would grow even further with a little more capital made available: “I then built a pigsty, and in July, I used the money from the spinach I was growing to buy pigs. I have been hustling for the last two years” (farmer 1).

### 4.2 The rural entrepreneurial micro-ecosystems factors

Entrepreneurial ecosystems encompass a blend of social, political, economic, and cultural elements within a particular region, fostering the development and expansion of innovative startups (Spigel, 2016:50). These ecosystems primarily revolve around the interdependent actions of cultivating productive entrepreneurship, which are geographically confined to specific regions (Stam & van de Ven, 2021).

Within this broader framework, entrepreneurial micro-ecosystems represent interconnected entrepreneurial activities in localized open systems, directly influenced and responsive to the larger entrepreneurial ecosystem. An illustrative example of this interconnectedness can be seen when a farmer was approached by the owner of Spar, who requested 300 bunches of spinach: “I was approached by the owner of Spar who asked me to supply her with 300 bunches of spinach. She indicated that she had noticed that people were not buying the spinach in her shop but were rather buying mine, and she was curious as to why. Until she saw how fresh and big my spinach was...” (farmer 2). The Spar owner had noticed that people preferred buying the farmer's spinach over hers due to its freshness and size, sparking curiosity. This anecdote highlights the interdependence and interconnectedness of the various components within entrepreneurial ecosystems (Mack & Mayer, 2016), where human players play a vital role in shaping and influencing every aspect of the ecosystem: “It worked to my advantage as I was advised to go and sell my produce at local retailers such as Spar and Boxer supermarkets, and to street vendors. I did as I was advised, and here I am now supplying these big food chains” (farmer 3).



### 4.3 The manifestation of entrepreneurial activity among rural youth

The problems generating employment opportunities for youth in masses are structural ones. Alleviation of this problem can be achieved through empowerment of youth themselves (Li, 2009): "I wanted to make agriculture fashionable in my community and I wanted the youth to realise that they don't have to stay in cities and wait for the government to change their lives. I wanted them to take control of their lives, so I employed youth who graduated from a nearby agricultural college to join my farming business" (farmer 2).

## 5 Discussion

Currently, South African agriculture confronts several emerging challenges in meeting food security demands. Among the enduring issues are the limited availability of arable land for previously disadvantaged communities and insufficient access to tools and materials for planting. However, recent research indicates a potential shift in the country's agricultural landscape, particularly regarding the capabilities of rural youth.

If policy makers and financial institutions step up to offer ample opportunities and capital, the innovative minds, energy, and enthusiasm of the youth hold the potential to uplift the current state of agriculture. With the right support and resources, the young generation could become a driving force in transforming the agricultural sector for the better.

Hence, it becomes imperative to align the determination and willpower of the youth with suitable opportunities, thereby creating a transformative impact on the nation's socio-economic development. The potential benefits are substantial, as failing to provide adequate opportunities and employment could lead to the looming threat of a demographic disaster.

Research from other developing countries, such as South Africa, demonstrates that involving youth in positive social relationships and activities significantly reduces the likelihood of them engaging in risky or anti-social behavior (Chowdhary & Chowdhary, 2013). Consequently, directing this vast reservoir of youthful energy towards agriculture emerges as a promising strategy to offer opportunities and ensure livelihood security in rural areas. By engaging the youth in agricultural endeavors, we not only tap into their potential to foster agricultural growth but also provide a pathway for their personal and communal development.

The engagement of youth in agricultural production and entrepreneurial ventures holds great importance, not solely for addressing the nation's food needs but, more crucially, for creating avenues for wealth generation and financial stability. This approach becomes essential in tackling the escalating issue of youth unemployment. To achieve this, deliberate policy changes, focused training, and proactive promotion targeted specifically at the youth are required to secure their interest and active involvement in agriculture.

By bolstering practical rural employment opportunities, we can effectively combat rural poverty and ensure a sufficient livelihood for the young popula-

tion in rural areas. It is imperative to foster an environment that encourages and empowers young people to embrace agriculture as a viable and rewarding career path, ultimately benefiting both the youth and the nation's agricultural sector as a whole.

## 6 Conclusion

First and foremost, policymakers should be advised that institutions, which encompass the rules of the game, form the primary and fundamental pillar of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Notably, economic institutions within society, such as the structure of property rights and the presence of effective market frameworks, hold particular significance for entrepreneurship (North, 1990). Economic institutions play a crucial role as they shape the structure of economic incentives. In the absence of property rights, young farmers in rural villages, for instance, lack the motivation to invest in physical or human capital and cannot achieve greater efficiency without access to land resources. Moreover, economic institutions contribute to the efficient allocation of resources, determining the distribution of profits, revenues, and residual control rights. Therefore, their presence and proper functioning are essential for fostering entrepreneurial activities and sustainable economic development.

In order to effectively address prevailing organizational and bureaucratic obstacles, it is imperative to establish and deploy incubators within villages, serving as protective shields for startups against entrepreneurial complexities. As highlighted by the farmers in this study, their aim is to bridge the gap between agricultural production and market access. Incubators play a crucial role in preventing promising startups from losing momentum due to sluggish decision-making processes or intricate entrepreneurial challenges. It is vital that the working model of these incubators aligns with the startups' preferred approach, encompassing several key characteristics. Well-designed incubators should prioritize simplicity, maintaining a spirit of entrepreneurship by minimizing unnecessary formalities.

Young agricultural entrepreneurs, like their counterparts in the market, acquire knowledge through observation of other entrepreneurs' behaviors, actions, and outcomes. They also draw lessons from the survival strategies employed by their parents. Within an entrepreneurial ecosystem, the "success stories" of ventures hold immense value as they provide valuable insights to young agricultural entrepreneurs. By studying the experiences of entrepreneurs who are currently or were previously part of the system, these aspiring entrepreneurs gain knowledge and learn from their achievements. These success stories, along with other narratives, serve a dual purpose in the formation and development of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Firstly, they contribute to the transmission of cultural values, shaping the ecosystem's identity. Secondly, they lend legitimacy to the system and attract attention to it. Ultimately, these narratives aid participants in understanding the ecosystem and finding their rightful place within it. Moreover, this research adds to the existing body of knowledge on regional entrepreneurship in rural entrepreneurial ecosystems within developing economies. It highlights the signifi-

cance of institutional factors in influencing the quality of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, with a specific focus on the institutional arrangements that facilitate government support for entrepreneurship, encourage an entrepreneurial culture, promote sustainability, foster civil society involvement, and advance business education.

## 7 References

- Aidis, R. (2017). *Do institutions matter for entrepreneurial development? IZA World of Labor* (Vol. 334). Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).
- Amal, M., & Filho, A. (2010). Internationalization of small- and medium-sized enterprises: A multi case study. *European Business Review*, 22(6), 608–623.
- Anggadwita, G., Ramadani, V., & Ratten, V. (2017). Sociocultural environments and emerging economy entrepreneurship women entrepreneurs in Indonesia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 9(1), 85–96.
- Aoyama, Y. (2009). Entrepreneurship and regional culture: The case of Hamamtsu and Kyoto, Japan. *Regional Studies*, 43, 495–512.
- Atiase, V. Y., Mahmood, S., Wang, Y., & Botchie, D. (2017). Developing entrepreneurship in Africa: Investigating critical resource challenges. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 25(4), 644–666.
- Audretsch, D. B., & Belitski, M. (2017). Entrepreneurial ecosystems in cities: Establishing the framework conditions. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, 42, 1030–1051.
- Banc, C., & Messeghem, K. (2020). Discovering the entrepreneurial micro-ecosystem: The case of a corporate accelerator. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 6(5), 593–605.
- Baraldi, E., & Ingemansson Havenvind, M. (2016). Identifying new dimensions of business incubation: A multi-level analysis of Karolinska Institute's incubation system. *Technovation*, 50-51, 53–68.
- Beynon, M. J., Jones, P., & Pickernell, D. (2016). Country-based comparison analysis using fsQCA investigating entrepreneurial attitudes and activity. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(4), 1271–1276.
- Boucher, S., Cullen, M., & Calitz, A. P. (2023). Culture, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial ecosystems: evidence from Nelson

Mandela Bay, South Africa. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, ahead of printing.

- Bowmaker-Falconer, A., & Meyer, N. (2022). *Fostering entrepreneurial ecosystem vitality: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor South Africa*. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.
- Bridge, S., & O'Neill, K. (2013). *Understanding enterprise, entrepreneurship and small business*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Bruns, K., Bosma, N., Sanders, M., & Schramm, M. (2017). Searching for the existence of entrepreneurial ecosystems: A regional cross-section growth regression approach. *Small Business Economics*, 49(1), 31–54.
- Cao, Z., & Shi, X. (2021). A systematic literature review of entrepreneurial ecosystems in advanced and emerging economies. *Small Business Economics*, 57, 75–110.
- Choudhary, H. R., & Choudhary, A. (2013). Why Indian farmers and rural youth are moving from farming. *Popular Kheti*, 2(2), 60–66.
- Dana, L. P., Ratten, V., & Honyenuga, B. (2018). *African entrepreneurship. Palgrave studies of entrepreneurship in Africa*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dobbins, J. C. (2019). The inherent and supervisory power. *Georgia Law Review*, 411, 428.
- Dodd, S. D., & Anderson, A. R. (2007). Mumps Imus and the mything of the individualistic entrepreneur. *International Small Business Journal*, 25, 341–360.
- Fritsch, M., & Storey, D. J. (2014). Entrepreneurship in a regional context: Historical roots, recent developments and future challenges. *Regional Studies*, 48, 939–954.
- Labutte, D. (2023). Sasol capacitates local NPOs in Bronkhorstspuit area. Retrieved from <https://ridgetimes.co.za/312486/sasol-capacitates-local-npos/>
- Li, T. M. (2009). Exit from agriculture: A step forward or a step backward for the rural poor? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(3), 629–636.
- Lindeque, B. (2018). Students partner with corporate to create positive sustainable change to a community in need. Retrieved from <https://www.goodthingsguy.com/business/gwakwani-project/>
- Love, J. H., & Roper, S. (2015). SME innovation, exporting and growth: a review of existing evidence. *International Small Business Journal*, 33, 28–48.

Exploring the Entrepreneurial Micro-Ecosystem:  
Agribusiness Among Youth in Rural South Africa

- Lukeš, M., Longo, M. C., & Zouhar, J. (2019). Do business incubators really enhance entrepreneurial growth? Evidence from a large sample of innovative Italian start-ups. *Technovation*, 82-83, 25–34.
- Malecki, E. J. (2018). Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Geography Compass*, 12(3), 12–21.
- McMullen, J. S. (2011). Delineating the domain of development entrepreneurship: a market-based approach to facilitating inclusive economic growth. *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 35(1), 185–193.
- Meagher, K. (2018). Cannibalizing the informal economy: Frugal innovation and economic inclusion in Africa. *European Journal of Development Research*, 30(1), 17–33.
- Municipalities of South Africa - Nelson Mandela bay metropolitan Municipality*. (2022). Retrieved from <https://municipalities.co.za/overview/1/nelson-mandela-bay-metropolitan-municipality>
- Neck, H. M., Meyer, G. D., Cohen, B., & Corbett, A. C. (2004). An entrepreneurial system view of new venture creation. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 42(2), 190–208.
- North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change, and economic performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ram, M., Edwards, P., Jones, T., & Villares-Varela, M. (2017). From the informal economy to the meaning of informality: Developing theory on firms and their workers. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 37(8), 361–373.
- Ratten, V., & Dana, L. P. (2019). *Societal entrepreneurship and competitiveness*. London, England: Emerald Publishing.
- Ratten, V., & Dana, L. P. (2019). *Societal entrepreneurship and competitiveness*. London, England: Emerald Publishing.
- Scaringella, L., & Radziwon, A. (2018). Innovation, entrepreneurial, knowledge, and business ecosystems: Old wine in new bottles? . *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 133, 59–87.
- Shankar, R. K., & Shepherd, D. A. (2019). Accelerating strategic fit or venture emergence: Different paths adopted by corporate accelerators. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 34(5), 1–19.
- Sheriff, M., & Muffatto, M. (2015). The present state of entrepreneurship ecosystems in selected countries in Africa. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 6(1), 17–54.

- Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. London: Sage.
- Spigel, B. (2017). The relational organization of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 41(1), 49–72.
- Spigel, B., & Harrison, R. (2018). Toward a process theory of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 12(1), 151–168.
- Spilling, O. R. (1996). The entrepreneurial system: On entrepreneurship in the context of a mega-event. *Journal of Business Research*, 36, 91–103.
- Stam, E. (2015). Entrepreneurial ecosystems and regional policy: A sympathetic critique. *European Planning Studies*, 23(9), 1759–1769.
- Stam, E., & Van de Ven, A. (2021). Entrepreneurial ecosystem elements. *Small Business Economics*, 56(2), 809-832.
- Storey, M. A. (2005). Theories, methods and tools in program comprehension: Past, present and future . (pp. 181–191). 13th International Workshop on Program Comprehension (IWPC'05).
- Sutter, C., Bruton, G. D., & Chen, J. (2019). Entrepreneurship as a solution to extreme poverty: A review and future research directions. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 34(1), 197–214.
- Tehseen, S., & Anderson, A. R. (2020). Cultures and entrepreneurial competencies; Ethnic propensities and performance in Malaysia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 12(5), 643–666.
- Theodoraki, C., & Messeghem, K. (2017). Exploring the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the field of entrepreneurial support: A multi-level approach. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 31(1), 47–66.
- Thurik, R., & Wennekers, S. (2004). Entrepreneurship, small business and economic growth. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 11(1), 140-149.
- Williams, N., & Vorley, T. (2015). Institutional asymmetry: How formal and informal institutions affect entrepreneurship in Bulgaria. . *International Small Business Journal*, 33(8), 840–861.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research design and methods* (4 ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.